



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Lincoln College,  
Oxford, 2 Sept. 1892.

To the Editor of the

JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY:

Dear Sir—

Philosophy at Oxford forms one portion of the work required in the school of *Literæ Humaniores*, which is still the most popular of the honor schools, and contains a larger proportion of able students than any other. Until within recent years, the philosophical portion was considered the most important, and it remains of equal importance with the other subject, ancient history. The consequence is that nowhere else in England (I don't include Scotland) is there so large a body of students of philosophy. The distinctive feature of the study, as pursued at Oxford, is that which it owes to its connection with the study of classical history and literature. The statutes of the examination (and the studies of the place are regulated almost entirely by the examination) prescribe "logic and the elements of moral and political philosophy;" and in these subjects certain Greek authors are required from all students. Nominally there is a considerable choice of authors, but the course has been more or less fixed by custom. Practically every one studies the "Republic" of Plato, the "Ethics" of Aristotle, parts of Aristotle's "Organon," and Bacon's "Novum Organum." This forms the staple of the work, and as many of the great questions of philosophy are raised, in one form or another, by the Greek writers, or are suggested by contrast, these books serve as text-books upon which to base both the history of the subject and the scientific treatment of it. Students are expected to study the subject in its modern form, and they study either independently, or through lectures, some of the important English works. Thos. Mill's works are read, especially the "Logic;" the better students read parts of Lotze or Mr. Bradley's work on logic, and acquire more knowledge of the great English succession, and perhaps of Kant. "Logic," I may remark, is understood in a very loose sense as equivalent to mental philosophy, as a whole, and includes metaphysics and to a certain limited extent, psychology. On account of the importance assigned to the "Ethics" and "Republic," moral philosophy has become the most prominent part of the work and produces the best results. Political philosophy is studied in close connection with it, in such books as Aristotle's "Politics," Maine's works and the like. In moral philosophy the men read such well known works as Green's, Prof. Sedgwick's, Mr. Spencer's, Dr. Martineau's, and many read Kant's smaller work. Of course you will understand that there is some variety in the reading, and that, naturally it is, in general, only portions of these books which are read, and in Oxford, as elsewhere, the tendency is for the undergraduate to rely on his lectures to a greater extent than even the vanity of the lecturers themselves would think desirable. Besides this general course of study, special authors or books may be offered as special subjects, and sometimes are, such as Aristotle's "Politics," or "de Anima," Locke, Hume, Kant's critique and the like. Experimental psychology is one of these subjects, but has never been offered as yet, to my knowledge.

Any one who looks at the list of lectures given will be struck at first sight by two things, the great number of lecturers and the multiplication of lectures on certain subjects. These are consequences of the college system. Each college supplies a lecturer, and there is a natural tendency to lecture on the regular subjects. Including the three professors, there are as many as twenty persons giving lectures in philosophy, and in any one year there will be as many as 4 or 5 different lectures on each of the two staple books, the "Ethics" and the "Republic." All lectures are open to the whole University, but there is not

much organization for division of the labor. It would be tedious to enumerate all the subjects usually given in lectures. Prof. Wm. Wilson lectures at present on systematic logic, sometimes on Aristotle's logic. Prof. Wallace lectures on the history of ethical theories, and on other ethical subjects. Prof. Case on Aristotle's metaphysics, and on Aristotle's and Bacon's logic, and on general metaphysical questions. There are other lectures on logic, on Bacon and Aristotle, on the English philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries, elementary metaphysics, philosophical terms, on the English moralists, on Kant's ethics, and on moral and political philosophy as a whole. Mr. D. G. Ritchie, of Jesus College, is one of the most popular lecturers on political philosophy. I will not mention the names of many of the lecturers. One of the most influential has been Mr. R. L. Nettleship, of Christ's, the editor of Green's works, who has just been taken from us by an untimely and melancholy death. Greek philosophy offers a field for many distinguished scholars, like Prof. Jewett, Mr. Bywater, Mr. J. A. Stewart. Writing for a journal of psychology, I have to confess with regret that systematic lectures on psychology are infrequent. Wm. Blunt of Christchurch has lectured on the subject, and I now give a course of lectures, and hope to extend activity in this direction. To some extent psychology is treated in the lectures on logic. But the subject of psychology is the most glaring weakness of the Oxford teaching of philosophy.

The lecture list gives a very imperfect idea of the system of teaching, a large part of which is done privately by the college tutors. It is the custom for each student to bring a written essay on some philosophical subject to his tutor at stated times, generally once a week during certain terms. These meetings give the tutor an opportunity of discussing questions thoroughly with his pupils, and at the same time of suggesting courses of reading to suit their special tastes and aptitudes. Many persons think this the most valuable part of the training, and it is certainly the most characteristic feature of the Oxford system. Others, while admitting its value in many cases, think it wasteful to the energies of the teacher, without producing a proportionate advantage to the taught. Any one who has seen the large amount of solid and able work which is produced in the examination, must admit that the teaching, whether by public lectures or private tuition, is highly effective.

But the demands made by the examination on the men are so great (for they have to read Greek and Roman history as well as the original writers) that there is necessarily little room left except in the case of the ablest men for originality to show itself.

It is not very easy to say what the prevalent character of the teaching in philosophy is. The lecturers do not often try to profit by attending each other's lectures, and one has to guess from the best produced by the men in examination, which does not at present indicate any very dominant mode of thinking amongst the lecturers. Until recently the influence of T. H. Green was very marked, and on the whole this philosophy is still the strongest. But, the spell of Green's personality removed, the idealistic German philosophy by which Oxford has been so deeply influenced has lost much of its potency, must I say for evil or for good? In general the atmosphere is more favorable to criticism than to construction. An outsider might justly charge the University with what Mr. Spencer calls the anti-patriotic bias in philosophy. We have been so occupied with the defects of our homebred philosophy that we have neglected its merits. I should mention, while speaking of the character of the teaching, that our most eminent resident worker in philosophy and psychology, Mr. F. H. Bradley, has never taught in lectures, and another eminent writer who used to be a lecturer, Mr. Bosanquet, lectures at Oxford no longer.

The list of lectures from which I have quoted shows a considerable variety of subjects which are lectured upon. And, of course, it gives no clue to the special private studies of individual teachers, and to the possibilities of special guidance which a student would be sure to find from some one teacher or other, amongst so many engaged on the subject. Still the connection of philosophy with other subjects like ancient history, while it has peculiar merits and is remarkably successful in its results, makes it difficult to study the science as a whole very fully, or its more special department in any detail at all. There are at present no post-graduate courses such as you have in the United States. Perhaps greater opportunities will be given in the future for those who wish to study the subject without giving too much attention to Greek authorities. A full recognition of the claims of psychology is especially to be desired. It is a welcome fact, at the present term, that the younger graduates are turning more and more to this subject. Before long we may, I trust, have a laboratory for experimental psychology. It is not too much to hope that the university of Hobbes and Locke may once more contribute by active teaching and active study to that philosophical subject which is most closely associated with the name of England. Believe me

Yours very truly,

S. ALEXANDER.